

Survival of the Screw-worm in Southeastern United States

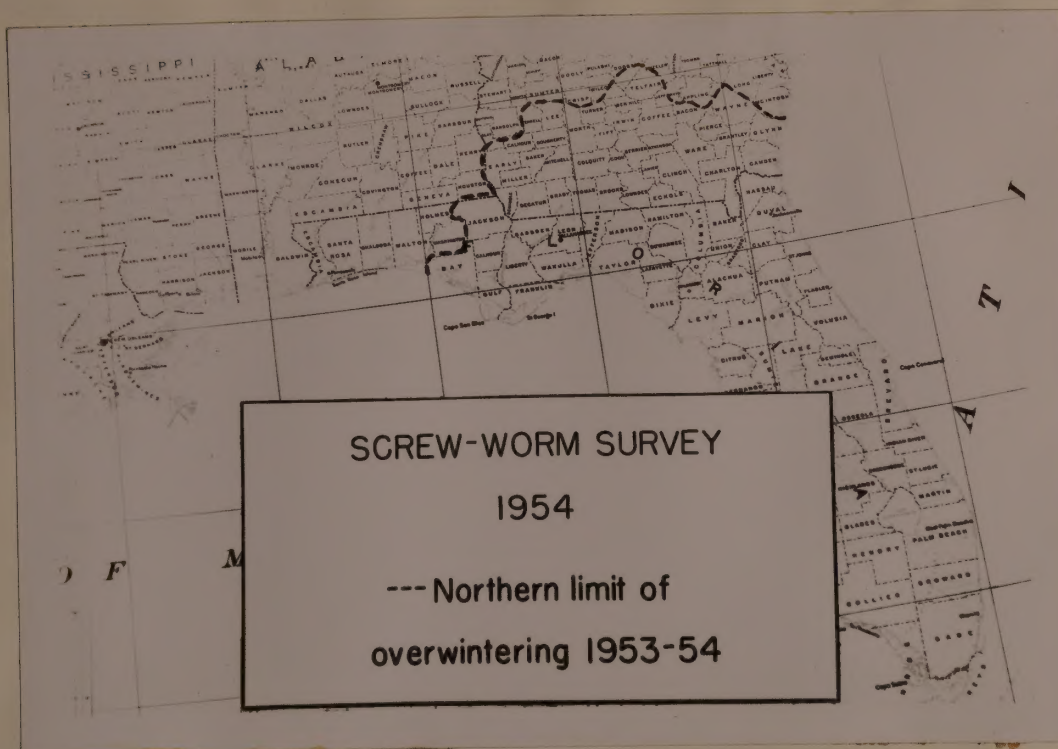
During the Winter of 1953-54.

L. J. Bottimer

A survey to determine the northern limits of the overwintering area of the screw-worm, Callitroga hominivorax (Coquerel), for the winter of 1953-54 in the southeastern United States was made during the period March 22 to May 12, 1954. Data on the occurrence of winter cases were obtained by contacting county agents, veterinarians, dealers in insecticides, and livestock owners and handlers.

Records of winter cases were first obtained from Gainesville, Florida, and then from several counties in northeastern Florida. Working northward into Georgia, records were obtained as far north as Glynn, Wayne, Telfair, Dodge (southern part), Turner, Lee, and Terrell, and to and including Early and Seminole counties in the extreme southwestern part of the state. Jackson and Bay were determined as being the most western counties in Florida with survival records. From the overwintering records for Georgia and Florida it was expected that flies would have survived the winter in southeastern Alabama. However, about three days were spent surveying that part of the state and no positive evidence of fly survival was gathered.

The northern boundary of the overwintering area for 1953-54 as determined by this survey is shown on the accompanying map as a broken line.



1890

1941

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The opinion among many of the parties contacted on the present survey was that the screw-worm has been less abundant than it was previous to the unusually cold winter of 1950-51. As the survey progressed, reports of April cases became rather general (including records from Henry, Houston, and Geneva counties, Alabama), indicating an early start of spring activity. If weather conditions are favorable to the screw-worm, the population can be expected to become considerably greater than it has been since the fall of 1950.

In combating the screw-worm, the newer remedies with lindane appeared to be generally accepted as improved products. Many livestock owners were regulating breeding programs so the young would be dropped during the winter months, and such operations as dehorning and castration were being performed to a considerable extent during this period when there is at least a normal lull in fly activity. Recent enforcement of fencing laws in some of the few remaining counties in Georgia and Florida where open range was allowed will permit more frequent examination of livestock, and this should aid materially in decreasing the fly population.

The opinion of the majority of the members of the committee is that the present situation in the country is such that it is not possible to carry out the programme of the Government. It is therefore suggested that the Government should consider the possibility of a new constitution which would provide for a more democratic form of government. It is also suggested that the Government should consider the possibility of a new system of taxation which would be more equitable and would provide for a more efficient system of public services. It is further suggested that the Government should consider the possibility of a new system of land tenure which would provide for a more equitable distribution of land and would provide for a more efficient system of public services.

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